

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 18318

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, UR, US
SUBJECT: FRG-SOVIET RELATIONS: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS
VIEWED FROM MOSCOW

REF: (A) MOSCOW 14751, (B) MOSCOW 18058

SUMMARY: CONSIDERED AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF CON-
TINUING SHARP CRITICISM OF THE U.S., SOVIET MEDIA
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ARE GIVING RELATIVELY POSITIVE TREATMENT TO THE FRG
AND CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT. FRG EMBASSY OFFICERS ATTRI-
BUTE THE MEDIA'S LINE IN PART TO THE GOOD IMPRESSION
WHICH THE FRG AND ESPECIALLY CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT
MADE ON BREZHNEV DURING HIS MAY VISIT. THEY ARE
HARD PUT TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TANGIBLE GAINS IN
BILATERAL RELATIONS BUT BELIEVE THE SOVIET HANDLING

OF A CURRENT FRG ART EXHIBIT, WHICH INCLUDES BERLIN PAINTINGS, TO BE A FAVORABLE DEVELOPMENT. THEY ALSO POINT TO THE SOVIET MEDIA'S SILENCE ON CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT'S VISIT TO BERLIN WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE CONTINUING STEADY RATE OF GERMAN ETHNIC EMIGRATION. WE SUGGESTED IN EARLIER REPORTING THAT THE SOVIETS ARE ATTEMPTING TO SEPARATE THE U.S. FROM ITS NATO ALLIES IN WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED A SOVIET USE OF THE "EUROPEAN CARD" (REFS A AND B). THE ATTEMPT SEEMS ALL TOO OBVIOUS IN CASE OF THE FRG. END SUMMARY.

1. AS NOTED REFTTEL B, THE WEST GERMANS FARED WELL IN THE SOVIET COMMENTARIES ON THE HELSINKI AGREEMENT'S THIRD ANNIVERSARY. WHILE THE U.S. WAS SINGLED OUT FOR TRYING TO THWART THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FINAL ACT, CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT RECEIVED PRAISE FOR HIS INTENTION TO RAISE THE QUALITY AND LEVEL OF RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW. OFTEN THE CRITICISM AND THE PRAISE WERE CLOSELY JUXTAPOSED. (SOME CRITICAL COMMENT ON FRG POLICY CONTINUES TO APPEAR BUT MORE OFTEN IN THE MILITARY DAILY RED STAR THAN PRAVDA OR IZVESTIYA. RED STAR SPECIALLY WARNS OF ALLEGED MILITARY DEALINGS BETWEEN BONN AND PEKING, SUGGESTING THAT SOME EQUIPMENT MAY ALREADY BE ON ITS WAY.)

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2. WEST GERMAN DIPLOMATS, SENSITIVE TO THE DIFFERING PRESS TREATMENT METED OUT TO WASHINGTON AND BONN, EXPLAIN IT PARTLY IN TERMS OF THE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION SCHMIDT LEFT WITH BREZHNEV. THE FRG POLITICAL COUNSELOR TOLD AN EMBOFF AUGUST 1 THAT SCHMIDT BELIEVES BREZHNEV PERSONALLY WAS PERSUADED DURING HIS STAY IN WEST GERMANY THAT THE FRG DEEPLY WANTS TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH THE USSR AND DOES NOT WANT TO GENERATE TENSION OVER BERLIN. THE FRG DIPLOMAT WENT ON TO EXPLAIN DIFFERING ACCENTS IN U.S. AND FRG POLICY TOWARDS THE SOVIETS ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN TERMS OF THE ACCOUNT THE FRG MUST TAKE OF THE EMIGRATION NEEDS OF THE GERMAN ETHNICS IN THE USSR AS WELL AS THE REALITIES OF A DIVIDED COUNTRY. THE NOT FULLY APPRECIATE THE CONSTRAINTS WITHIN WHICH FRG FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS THE SOVIET UNION OPERATES. A FURTHER FACTOR WHICH HE SAID BEARS ON THE FRG POSTURE IS THAT HISTORICALLY THERE IS A BURDEN OF "RUSSIAN HATRED" TOWARDS THE GERMANS WHICH HAS TO BE ACCOMMODATED IN FRG POLICY. HE IMPLIED BONN MAY HAVE TO "PULL ITS PUNCHES" IN MATTERS SUCH AS HUMAN RIGHTS CRITICISM.

3. WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE IMPROVED ATMOSPHERICS HAVE RESULTED IN TANGIBLE GAINS, THE WEST GERMANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN RECENTLY WERE HARD PUT TO PROVIDE SPECIFIC INSTANCES. THEY CONTINUE TO HEAR FROM OFFICIAL SOVIETS THAT THE EASTERN PROPOSAL AT VIENNA IN JUNE REFLECTS SUCCESSFUL TALKS IN BONN BETWEEN BREZHNEV AND SCHMIDT. THEY SAY THEY DO NOT KNOW HOW THE BONN MEETINGS MIGHT HAVE SHAPED THE EASTERN PROPOSAL BUT SPECULATE THERE MAY HAVE BEEN SOME ADJUSTMENTS AFTER THE VISIT TO MAKE THE PROPOSAL

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LESS UNPALATABLE TO THE WESTERN SIDE.

4. THE FRG EMBOFFS ALSO POINT TO THE CURRENT EXHIBIT OF GERMAN ART, 1890-1918, AT MOSCOW'S PUSHKIN

GALLERY AND THE SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO PERMIT PAINTINGS
LOANED FROM BERLIN GALLERIES TO BE INTEGRATED WITH
THOSE FROM THE FRG. CUSTOMARILY AT FRG EXHIBITIONS
ITEMS ORIGINATING IN BERLIN HAVE TO BE PHYSICALLY
SEPARATED FROM THOSE FROM WEST GERMANY. THIS HAS
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BEEN THE CASE, ACCORDING TO FRG EMBOFFS, WITH
EXHIBITS OF BOOKS AND MANUFACTURED GOODS. REGARDING
THE CURRENT EXHIBIT, THE SOVIETS INSISTED THAT THE
QUADRIpartite LANGUAGE THAT WEST BERLIN IS NOT A
"CONSTITUENT PART" OF THE FRG ALTHOUGH TIES MAY BE
MAINTAINED BE EXPRESSLY FLAGGED TO EXHIBIT-GOERS.
ACCORDINGLY, THE SOVIET-PUBLISHED CATALOGUE ON ITS
TITLE PAGE QUOTES THE PRECISE LANGUAGE FROM THE QP,
WHICH IS ALSO POSTED ALONG WITH THE WEST BERLIN
FLAG AT THE EXHIBIT. NONETHELESS, THE WEST GERMANS
HERE ARE POINTING TO THE INTEGRATION OF THE PAINTINGS
AS EVIDENCE OF A MODEST GAIN PROBABLY ATTRIBUTABLE
TO BREZHNEV'S VISIT.

5. BEYOND THE EXHIBIT, THE FRG OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW
ATTACH IMPORTANCE TO THE FACT THAT THE SOVIET PRESS
WAS MUM (AND THE SOVIET OFFICIAL REACTION LARGELY
RESTRAINED IN THEIR VIEW) WHEN CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT
ACCOMPANIED THE PRESIDENT TO BERLIN. THIS WAS ALSO
CONSISTENT WITH THE MEDIA'S TREATMENT OF THE
CHANCELLOR WHEN HE ACCOMPANIED QUEEN ELIZABETH ON THE
EARLIER TRIP. AS FOR THE HALF-DAY HARASSMENT OF TRANSIT
TRAFFIC ON JULY 15, THE WEST GERMANS HERE FIND
INTERESTING THE FACT THERE HAVE BEEN PRIVATE SOVIET
SUGGESTIONS TO THEM THAT THE EAST GERMANS WERE RESPON-
SIBLE. EVEN IF IT CAN'T BE BELIEVED, THEY FIND IT
INDICATIVE OF SOME CONCERN IN MOSCOW ABOUT IMPROVING
FRG-SOVIET BILATERAL RELATIONS.

6. REGARDING SOVIET PROCESSING OF GERMAN ETHNIC
EMIGRATION, THE RATE APPARENTLY CONTINUES STEADY AND
THERE HAS BEEN NO INCREASE SINCE THE VISIT. THE WEST
GERMANS SAY SOME DIFFICULT CASES HAVE BEEN SOLVED IN
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RECENT MONTHS, HOWEVER, SO THE SOVIETS MAY BE TRYING
TO HELP IN THIS WAY (AN FRG EMBOFF NOTED, FOR EXAMPLE,
THAT OF NINE ETHNIC GERMANS INVOLVED IN A PUBLICIZED
INCIDENT AT THE FRG EMBASSY SOME MONTHS AGO, EIGHT

HAVE SINCE QUIETLY RECEIVED EXIT PERMISSION).

7. FRG EMBASSY SAYS THERE ARE NO SIGNIFICANT VISITS TO MOSCOW ON THE HORIZON. EXTERNAL AFFAIRS STATE-SECRETARY HERMES VISITED MOSCOW IN EARLY JULY TO OPEN THE EXHIBIT BUT HIS MFA MEETING WAS DESCRIBED AS ROUTINE. (SYMPTOMATIC OF THE MORE FAVORABLE PRESS ATTENTION THE FRG IS RECEIVING, PRAVDA REPORTED ON ITS FRONT PAGE JULY 30 A STATEMENT MADE BY HERMES IN BONN AT A CSCE EXPERTS' MEETING TO THE EFFECT THAT COOPERATION IN THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI IS POSSIBLE.)

8. ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMINE CORRESPONDENT WAS RECENTLY CALLED IN BY THE MFA PRESS DEPARTMENT AND REBUKED FOR HIS REPORTING ON THE DISSIDENT TRIALS. HE REPORTEDLY WAS CRITICIZED SPECIFICALLY FOR IGNORING OFFICIAL SOVIET INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRIALS. WE UNDERSTAND HE WAS ALSO WARNED THAT IF HIS PAPER CONTINUED TO RUN UNFLATTERING CARTOONS OF BREZHNEV, "NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES" COULD ENSUE FOR THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMINE'S MOSCOW BUREAU. DESPITE THIS THREAT, HE WAS TOLD HIS MEETING WAS "JUST A FRIENDLY TALK." TOON

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